

COPS AND ROBBERS

This exercise uses the hand and arm position that a robber wants when he commands, “Stick ’em up!” Cops and Robbers enhances participant posture and adds a nice chest and shoulder stretch to each repetition as an added bonus.

Benefits »

- ◉ Strengthens upper and midback and posterior deltoids.
- ◉ Facilitates external shoulder rotation and stretches the chest.
- ◉ Reduces thoracic rounding of the spine.

Set It Up »

You will not need any special equipment for this exercise, unless you elect to use light hand weights for some participants.

How to Do It »

The Start

- ◉ Participants sit tall, with abs in, ribs lifted, spine lengthened, head retracted, and shoulder blades back and down.
- ◉ Lift both arms straight out in front of shoulders at shoulder height.



The Moves

Use the following cues.

- ◉ Pull both arms back until elbows are in line with the torso. Keep forearms at same level as the upper arms. Squeeze shoulder blades toward each other.
- ◉ Rotate your forearms upward so that your hands move skyward. This is the “stick ’em up” Cops and Robbers part of the movement.
- ◉ You should feel the muscles in your back and shoulders tighten as they do the work of lifting your forearms. Can you? Good.

- ⦿ Can you feel your core muscles tighten, too? Perfect.
- ⦿ Lower the forearms back to level position and then back out to the starting position. The out position stretches the shoulder-blade retractors. Can they feel that?
- ⦿ Repeat 6 to 12 times, as tolerated.

Take It Further »

- ⦿ Slow the movements down.
- ⦿ Squeeze the shoulder blades together each time you pull arms back from the forward (starting) position.
- ⦿ Lift forearms up into the up positions each time with a little more oomph!

Give It More Balance »

- ⦿ Sit at the edge of the chair.
- ⦿ Sit at the edge of the chair with feet tandem and heels lifted.
- ⦿ Stand to do this exercise.
- ⦿ Sit on a balance disc in a chair with arms.

Keep It Safe »

Nothing should hurt their shoulders or back. Many older adults with shoulder problems may be unable to do this exercise successfully. See if they can do shoulder rotation a different way: suggest they keep their upper arms by their sides and then rotate just their forearms out to the side. The forearms would stay parallel to the floor. Encourage tall sitting throughout.